

IN THE CLAIMS:

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1. (Previously amended) Apparatus for decoding packetized program information from a first source to provide data content of a program, comprising:

means for identifying ancillary information in said packetized program information, said ancillary information including information describing a multimedia image object associated with an image in said packetized program information, said multimedia object description information comprising,

(a) a location indicator identifying a location of a multimedia object for use in acquiring said multimedia object, and

(b) a type indicator identifying a multimedia object type for use in decoding said multimedia object; and

means for acquiring and decoding said multimedia object using said multimedia object description information; and

means for formatting said multimedia object for display.

2. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said location indicator identifies a location of said multimedia object in one of (a) said packetized program information from said first source, and (b) information derived from a second source different to said first source,

3. (Original) The Apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said location indicator identifies a location of said multimedia object derived from said first source using one of (a) an MPEG compatible packet Identifier (PID), (b) an MPEG compatible Digital Storage Media code.

4. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said location indicator identifies a location of said multimedia object derived from said second source using one of (a) an Internet URL, (b) an Internet IP address, (c) an Email address, (d) a telephone / fax / videophone number.

5. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said means for acquiring said multimedia

object includes establishing bi-directional communication with said second source using said location indicator, and said bi-directional communication path is different to the communication path between said decoding apparatus and said first source.

C6 6. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said multimedia object type comprises at least one of, (a) a video segment or still image, (b) an audio segment, (c) text, (d) an Internet web page or Internet data, (e) an advertisement, (f) an icon for user selection of a service, (g) an animation segment, (h) an Email message, (i) a user prompting indicator, and (j) a broadcast channel identification icon.

7. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said multimedia object description information further includes at least one of, (a) an object start time, (b) an object duration, (c) an object display mode, (d) an object version number, (e) an object format, for use in decoding.

8. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said formatting means includes means for associating said multimedia object with one of (a) a video image, and (b) audio data, and said formatting means forms a composite image for display combining said multimedia object and at least one of, (a) an electronic program guide, (b) a video program, and (c) an Internet web page image.

9. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said ancillary information comprises program specific information for conveying an electronic program guide from said first source, and wherein said multimedia object is associated with said electronic program guide.

10. (Previously amended) A storage medium containing digital data representing video information comprising:

packetized program information representing a video program; and ancillary information including information describing a multimedia image object associated with an image in said packetized program information, said multimedia object description information comprising,

(a) a location indicator identifying a location of said multimedia object for use in acquiring said multimedia object, and

(b) a type indicator identifying a multimedia object type for use in decoding said multimedia object; and information for associating said multimedia object with an image in said packetized program information.

11. (Currently amended) A The storage medium according to claim 10, wherein said ancillary information comprises program specific information containing an electronic program guide, and wherein said multimedia object is associated with said electronic program guide.

12. (Original) A method for forming program guide information at a first source suitable for decoding packetized program information to provide data content of a program, comprising the steps of:

forming information describing a multimedia image object associated with an image in said packetized program information, said multimedia object description information comprising,

(a) a location indicator identifying a location of a multimedia object for use in acquiring said multimedia object, and

(b) a type indicator identifying a multimedia object type for use in decoding said multimedia object; and

forming linking information associating said multimedia object with an image in said packetized program information; and incorporating said multimedia object description information and said linking information into packetized data for output to a transmission channel.

13. (Currently amended) A The method according to claim 12, wherein said location indicator identifies a location of said multimedia object in one of (a) said packetized program information from said first source, and (b) information derived from a second source different to said first source.

14. (Currently amended) A The method according to claim 13, wherein said location indicator identifies a location of said multimedia object from said first source using one of (a) an MPEG compatible packet Identifier, (b) an MPEG compatible Digital Storage Media *code*.

15. (Currently amended) A The method according to claim 13, wherein said location indicator identifies a location of said multimedia object derived from said second source using one of (a) an Internet URL, (b) an Internet IP address, (c) an Email address, (d) a telephone/fax/videophone number.

16. (Currently amended) A The method according to claim 15, wherein said multimedia object type comprises at least one of, (a) a video segment or still image, (b) an audio segment, (c) text, (d) an Internet web page or Internet data, (e) an advertisement, (f) an icon for user selection of a service, (g) an animation segment, (h) an Email message, (i) a user prompting indicator, and (j) a broadcast channel identification icon.

17. (Currently amended) A The method according to claim 12, wherein said multimedia object description information further includes at least one of, (a) an object start time, (b) an object duration, (c) an object display mode, (d) an object version number, (e) an object format, for use in decoding.

18. (Currently amended) A The method according to claim 12, wherein said linking information associates said multimedia object with at least one of, (a) an electronic program guide, (b) a video program, (c) an audio program and (d) an Internet web page image.

19. (Original) A method for decoding packetized program information to provide data content of a program, comprising the steps of:

identifying ancillary information in said packetized program information, said ancillary information including information describing a multimedia image object associated with an image in said packetized program information, said multimedia object description information comprising,

(a) a location indicator identifying a location of a multimedia object for use in acquiring said multimedia object, and

(b) a type indicator identifying a multimedia object type for use in decoding said multimedia object; and acquiring and decoding said multimedia object using said multimedia object description information; and formatting said multimedia object for display.

20. (Currently amended) ~~A~~ The method according to claim 19, including the step of associating said multimedia object with one of (a) a video image, and (b) audio data.

21. (Currently amended) ~~A~~ The method according to claim 20, including the step of forming a composite image for display combining said multimedia object and at least one of, (a) an electronic program guide, (b) a video program, and (c) an Internet web page image.

22-43 (canceled)

44. (Previously presented) A method for processing packetized program information from a first source to provide data content of a program, comprising the steps of:

identifying ancillary information in said packetized program information, said ancillary information including,

(a) a first identifier for identifying a location of data representing a multimedia object, and

(b) a second identifier for identifying a location of data representing program guide information, and

cl (c) a third identifier for identifying a location of data representing a video program in said packetized program information, and acquiring and decoding said multimedia object, said program guide information and said video program data using said ancillary information; and formatting acquired data for display.

45. (Canceled)

46. (Currently amended) A The method according to claim 44, wherein said first, ~~second and third identifiers identify~~ identifier identifies a location of said multimedia object in either one of (a) said packetized program information from said first source, and (b) information derived from a second source different to said first source.

47. (Currently amended) A The method according to claim 46, wherein said information is derived from said second source different to said first source using one of (a) an Internet URL, (b) an Internet IP address, (c) an Email address, (d) a telephone / fax / videophone number.

48. (Currently amended) A The method according to claim 44, wherein said formatting step includes the steps of associating said multimedia object with one of (a) a video image, and (b) audio data, and forming a composite image for display combining said multimedia object and at least one of. (a) an electronic program guide, (b) a video program, and (c) an Internet web page image.